

APPENDIX A

COMMODITY PACKAGE CONTENTS AND COMPARABLE PRICES

In the two Commodity Alternative Benefit demonstrations, the commodity packages were designed to provide a nutritious diet and meet the needs and preferences of the elderly. This appendix presents examples of the various commodity packages and provides estimates of the prices clients would pay in a local grocery store were they to purchase all of the items in a package. (This is the “comparable price” of the commodity package.)

In Connecticut, clients could choose from among three package options: (1) the regular commodity package, (2) the Latino commodity package, and (3) the Meals on Wheels (MOW) commodity package. The Latino commodity package was tailored to the preferences of Hispanic clients, and the MOW package was designed to supplement the food seniors received through the Meals on Wheels program. For each of these options, demonstration staff developed two packages (package I and package II) and alternated between packages from month to month. The regular and Latino packages were split into two “food baskets.” One food basket was distributed in the first half of the month, and the other in the second half. The MOW package was distributed once a month.

In North Carolina, all clients received a standard package (no optional packages were developed). As in Connecticut, two versions of the package were developed and staff alternated between packages from month to month. The packages were distributed once a month.

The amount of food that could be included in the food packages was determined in part by the USDA guidelines for the demonstration. Demonstrations were not allowed to let the average cost to the demonstration of each package—including costs of the commodities, shipping, and storage—exceed the average benefit for which elderly FSP clients at the demonstration site had been eligible in the previous 12 months. In Connecticut, this limit was \$43 in the first year of the demonstration, and \$46 in the second year; in North Carolina, the limit was \$38 in the first year of the demonstration and \$39 in the second year. USDA also required that the package contents be consistent with the Food Guide Pyramid.

For each demonstration, comparable prices for all commodity package contents were collected from a grocery store located within the area covered by that demonstration site. For most items, the prices reflected the lowest cost option for a particular good. However, when the brand and size of a package item could be matched exactly in the local grocery store, the price of that brand item was used to compute a comparable price. Prices listed in the following tables reflect packages distributed in the first year of the demonstrations.

Table B.1 presents the comparable prices for the various commodity packages in Connecticut and North Carolina. In Connecticut, the average package would have cost clients about \$58 if they had purchased all of the contents in a local grocery store. The packages differed in comparable price between the two monthly alternatives, with the package in one month having a comparable price substantially higher than the other. In North Carolina, the comparable price of the package contents was about \$70 per month.

Tables B.2 through B.7 present the contents of typical commodity packages in Connecticut, and Tables B.8 and B.9 present the contents of typical commodity packages in North Carolina. For each item in a package, the tables show the comparable prices obtained from local grocery stores. Note: throughout the demonstration, changes were made to the items included in the package as different items became available from USDA.

Table A.1: Summary of Commodity Package Comparable Prices Connecticut and North Carolina

	Comparable Price
Connecticut	
Regular Package I	\$68.78
Regular Package II	49.23
Average	59.00
Latino Package I	67.76
Latino Package II	47.18
Average	57.47
MOW Package I	61.85
MOW Package II	54.03
Average	57.94
Average Across Options	58.14
North Carolina	
Package I	68.55
Package II	71.70
Average	70.13

Source: Price data collected at local grocery stores.

A: Commodity Package Contents and Comparable Prices

Table A.2: Contents and Comparable Prices, Connecticut Regular Package I

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Food Basket A				
Canned Vegetables				
Green Beans	15.5 oz. can	5 Cans (Total)	0.25	
Kernel Corn	15.5 oz. can		0.25	
Mixed vegetables (A)	15.5 oz. can		0.25	
Spinach	15.5 oz. can		0.79	
Mixed vegetables (B)	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Carrots	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Sweet potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Tomatoes	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Potatoes	15.5 oz. can	0.73		3.50
Canned Juices				
Orange	46 oz. can	2 Cans (Total)	3.49	
Pineapple	46 oz. can		2.09	5.58
Prunes	1 lb. package	1 package	2.00	2.00
Tomato soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	0.79	0.79
Vegetable soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	1.19	1.19
Egg mix	6 oz. package	1 package	5.99	5.99
Canned stew	24 oz. can	2 cans	2.49	4.98
Canned tuna	12 oz. can	1 can	3.29	9.87
Macaroni and cheese	26 oz. package	1 package	2.00	2.00
Unsalted crackers	16 oz. package	1 package	0.59	0.59
Evaporated milk	12 fl. oz. can	1 can	0.50	0.50
SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET A				36.99
Food Basket B				
Canned Fruits				
Applesauce	15.5 oz. can	5 Cans (Total)	1.29	
Fruit cocktail	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Peaches	15.5 oz. can		1.59	
Pears	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Pineapple	15.5 oz. can		1.98	
Apricots	15.5 oz. can		1.29	7.28
Corn Squares Cereal	16 oz. box	1 box	3.29	3.29
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can	2 cans	0.99	1.98
Canned vegetarian beans	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.89	0.89
Egg noodles	1 lb. package	1 package	1.99	1.99
Spaghetti	2 lb. package	1 package	0.99	0.99
Farina	14 oz. package	1 package	1.39	1.39
American cheese	2 lb. block	1 block	6.58	6.58
Bakery mix	5 lb. package	1 package	4.23	4.23
Peanut butter	18 oz. jar (1 lb.)	2 jars	1.59	3.18
SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET A				31.79
TOTAL				68.78

Table A.3: Contents and Comparable Prices, Connecticut Regular Package II

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Food Basket A				
Canned Vegetables				
Green beans	15.5 oz. can	5 Cans (Total)	0.25	
Kernel corn	15.5 oz.. can		0.25	
Mixed vegetables (A)	15.5 oz can		0.25	
Spinach	15.5 oz. can		0.79	
Mixed vegetables (B)	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Carrots	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Sweet potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Tomatoes	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.73	3.50
Canned Juices				
Grape	46 oz. can	1 can	1.79	1.79
	15 oz.	1 package		
Raisins	package		2.00	2.00
Dehydrated potatoes	1 lb. package	1 package	3.69	3.69
Tomato soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Vegetable soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	1.19	1.19
Canned refried beans	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
	6 oz.	1 package		
Egg mix	package		5.99	5.99
Canned stew	24 oz. can	1 can	2.49	2.49
Canned tuna	12 oz. can	1 can	3.29	6.58
<i>SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET A</i>				<i>29.21</i>
Food Basket B				
Canned Fruits				
Applesauce	15.5 oz can	5 Cans (Total)	1.29	
Fruit cocktail	15.5 oz can		1.29	
Peaches	15.5 oz can		1.59	
Pears	15.5 oz can		1.29	
Pineapple	15.5 oz can		1.98	
Apricots	15.5 oz can		1.29	7.28
Dried beans				
Great Northern	2 lb. bag	1 bag	1.58	1.58
Cold cereal				
Bran Flakes	17.3 oz. box	1 box	3.99	3.99
Macaroni	1 lb. package	1 package	0.80	0.80
Rice	2 lb. package	1 package	0.89	0.89
Evaporated milk	12 fl. oz. can	1 can	0.50	0.50
Butter	1 lb. carton	1 carton	1.99	1.99
Roasted peanuts	18 oz. bag	1 bag	2.99	2.99
<i>SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET B</i>				<i>20.02</i>
TOTAL				49.23

Table A.4: Contents and Comparable Prices, Connecticut Latino Package I

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Food Basket A				
Canned Vegetables				
Green beans	15.5 oz. can	5 Cans (Total)	0.25	
Kernel corn	15.5 oz. can		0.25	
Mixed vegetables (A)	15.5 oz. can		0.25	
Spinach	15.5 oz. can		0.79	
Mixed vegetables (B)	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Carrots	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Sweet potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Tomatoes	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.73	3.50
Canned Juices				
Orange	46 oz. can	2 Cans (Total)	3.49	
Pineapple	46 oz. can		2.09	5.58
Prunes	1 lb. package	1 package	2.00	2.00
Tomato soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Vegetable soup	10.5 oz. can	2 cans	1.19	2.38
Egg mix	15.5 oz. can	2 cans	5.99	11.98
Canned tuna	6 oz. package	3 packages	2.39	7.17
Unsalted crackers	24 oz. can	1 can	0.59	0.59
Evaporated milk	12 oz. can	1 can	0.50	0.50
Beef stew		1 can	2.49	2.49
Cornmeal	5 lbs bag	1 bag	1.99	1.99
SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET A				39.17
Food Basket B				
Canned Fruits				
Applesauce	15.5 oz. can	5 Cans (Total)	1.29	
Fruit cocktail	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Peaches	15.5 oz. can		1.59	
Pears	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Pineapple	15.5 oz. can		1.98	
Apricots	15.5 oz. can		1.29	7.28
Dried beans				
Pinto	2 lbs. bag	One Bag	1.30	
Great Northern			1.58	
Kidney			1.18	
Lima			1.58	1.41
Corn Squares Cereal	16 oz. box	1 box	3.29	3.29
Dehydrated potatoes	1 lb. package	1 package	3.69	3.69
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can	2 cans	0.99	1.98
Canned vegetarian beans	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.89	0.89
Canned refried beans	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Rice	2 lb. package	1 can	0.89	0.89
Peanut butter	18 oz. jar	1 jar	1.59	1.59
American cheese	2 lb. block	1 block	6.58	6.58
SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET B				28.59
TOTAL				67.76

Table A.5: Contents and Comparable Prices, Connecticut Latino Package II

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Food Basket A				
Canned Vegetables				
Mixed vegetables (A)	15.5 oz. can	4 Cans (Total)	0.25	
Kernel corn	15.5 oz. can		0.25	
Peas	15.5 oz. can		0.25	
Spinach	15.5 oz. can		0.79	
Mixed vegetables (B)	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Carrots	15.5 oz. can		0.73	
Sweet potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Tomatoes	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can		0.99	
Potatoes	15.5 oz. can		0.73	2.80
Canned Juices				
Grapefruit	46 oz. can	1 can	3.49	3.49
Tomato soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Vegetable soup	10.5 oz. can	1 can	1.19	1.19
	6 oz.	1 package		
Egg mix	package		5.99	5.99
Canned tuna	12 oz. can	2 cans	3.29	6.58
	26 oz.	1 package		
Macaroni and cheese	package		2.00	2.00
Peanut Butter		1 jar	1.59	1.59
<i>SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET A</i>				24.63
Food Basket B				
Canned Fruits				
Applesauce	15.5 oz. can	6 Cans (Total)	1.29	
Fruit cocktail	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Peaches	15.5 oz. can		1.59	
Pears	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Pineapple	15.5 oz. can		1.98	
Apricots	15.5 oz. can		1.29	8.73
Dried beans				
Great Northern	2 lbs. Bag	1 bag	1.58	1.58
Cold Cereal				
Bran Flakes	17.3 oz. box	1 box	3.99	3.99
	15 oz.	1 package		
Raisins	package		2.00	2.00
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Canned vegetarian beans	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.89	0.89
Canned refried beans	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Rice	2 lb. package	1 package	0.89	0.89
Evaporated milk	12 fl. oz. can	1 can	0.50	0.50
Butter	1 lb. carton	1 carton	1.99	1.99
<i>SUBTOTAL, FOOD BASKET B</i>				22.55
TOTAL				47.18

Table A.6: Contents and Comparable Prices, Connecticut Meals-on-Wheels Package I

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Canned Vegetables				
Mixed vegetables	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.73	0.73
Canned Fruits				
Applesauce	15.5 oz. can	6 Cans (Total)	1.29	
Fruit cocktail	15.5 oz. can		1.59	
Peaches	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Pears	15.5 oz. can		1.98	
Pineapple	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Apricots	15.5 oz. can		1.29	8.73
Canned Juices				
Apple	46 oz. can	3 Cans (Total)	1.79	
Pineapple	46 oz. can		2.09	
Orange	46 oz. can		3.49	7.37
Cold Cereal				
Bran Flakes	17.3 oz. box	2 Boxes (Total)	3.99	
Corn Squares	16 oz. box		3.29	7.28
Prunes	1 lb. package	1 package	2.00	2.00
Tomato sauce	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.99	0.99
Tomato soup	10.5 oz. can	2 cans	0.99	1.98
Vegetable soup	10.5 oz. can	3 cans	1.19	3.57
Egg mix	6 oz. package	1 package	5.99	5.99
Canned tuna	12 oz. can	3 cans	3.29	9.87
	16 oz. package	1 package	0.59	0.59
Unsalted crackers	12 fl. oz. can	1 can	0.50	0.50
Evaporated milk	2 lb. block	1 block	6.58	6.58
American cheese	24 oz. can	1 can	2.49	2.49
Beef stew	18 oz. jar	3 jars	1.59	3.18
TOTAL				61.85

Table A.7: Contents and Comparable Prices, Connecticut Meals on-Wheels Package II

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Canned Vegetables				
Mixed vegetables	15.5 oz. can	1 can	0.73	0.73
Canned Fruits				
Applesauce	15.5 oz. can	6 Cans (Total)	1.29	
Fruit cocktail	15.5 oz. can		1.59	
Peaches	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Pears	15.5 oz. can		1.98	
Pineapple	15.5 oz. can		1.29	
Apricots	15.5 oz. can		1.29	8.73
Canned Juices				
Apple	46 oz. can	3 Cans (Total)	1.79	
Orange	46 oz. can		3.49	
Grape	46 oz. can		1.79	7.07
Cold Cereal				
Bran Flakes	17.3 oz. box	2 Boxes (Total)	3.99	
Corn Squares	16 oz. box		3.29	7.28
	15 oz. package	1 package		
Raisins	package		2.00	2.00
Tomato soup	10.5 oz. can	3 cans	0.99	2.97
Vegetable soup	10.5 oz. can	2 cans	1.19	2.38
Egg mix	6 oz. package	1 package	5.99	5.99
Canned tuna	12 oz. can	2 cans	3.29	6.58
	16 oz. package	1 package		
Unsalted crackers	package		0.59	0.59
Evaporated milk	12 fl. oz. can	1 can	0.50	0.50
Butter	1 lb. carton	1 carton	1.99	1.99
Bakery mix	5 lb. package	1 package	4.23	4.23
Roasted Peanuts	18 oz package	1 package	2.99	2.99
TOTAL				54.03

Table A.8: Contents and Comparable Price, North Carolina Regular Package I

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Vegetables				
Green Beans	14.5 oz.	3 cans	0.69	2.07
Carrots	14.5 oz.	1 can	0.59	0.59
Kernel Corn	15.25 oz.	2 cans	0.59	1.18
Mixed Vegetables	15 oz.	2 cans	0.75	1.50
Spaghetti Sauce	15 oz.	2 cans	1.29	2.58
Potatoes/Sliced	14.5 oz.	2 cans	0.69	1.38
Sweet Potatoes	15 oz.	1 can	0.82	0.82
Tomatoes	14.5 oz.	1 can	1.05	1.05
Soup-Vegetable Low Salt	10.5 oz.	2 cans	0.99	1.98
Canned Juices				
Orange	46 oz. can	2 Cans	1.89	
Grape	46 oz. can	(Total)	1.99	3.88
Fruits				
Applesauce	15 oz. can	2 cans	0.64	1.27
Peaches	15 oz. can	2 cans	1.19	2.38
Pears	15 oz. can	2 cans	1.19	2.38
Pineapple	20 oz. can	1 can	0.85	0.85
Raisins	15 oz. can	1 can	0.89	0.89
Meat				
Beef, frozen ground	16 oz.	2 packages	1.89	3.78
Chicken, frozen	Approx. 4 lbs	1 package	3.96	3.96
Beef Stew, canned	24 oz.	1 can	1.49	1.49
Dry Beans				
Pinto	36 oz.	1 package	1.55	
Peanut butter	18 oz.	1 package	2.09	
Peanuts, roasted	12 oz.	1 package	1.96	5.60
Cheese, Processed				
Evaporated Milk	36 oz.	1 block	4.47	4.47
Instant Nonfat Dry Milk	12 oz.	1 can	1.39	1.39
Crackers, unsalted	25.6 oz.	1 box	4.10	4.10
Egg Noodles	16 oz.	1 box	1.99	1.99
Quick Oats	16 oz.	1 package	1.09	1.09
Bakery Mix	42 oz.	1 package	2.39	2.39
Spaghetti	5 lbs.	1 package	3.44	3.44
Cereal, Corn Flakes	32 oz.	1 package	1.99	1.99
Vegetable Oil	18 oz.	1 box	2.89	2.89
Butter	2.9 lbs.	1 bottle	2.29	2.29
	16 oz.	1 block	2.99	2.99
TOTAL				68.55

Table A.9: Contents and Comparable Price, North Carolina Regular Package II

	Size	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
Vegetables				
Green Beans	14.5 oz.	2 cans	0.69	1.38
Carrots	14.5 oz.	2 cans	0.59	1.18
Kernel Corn	15.25 oz.	1 can	0.59	0.59
Mixed Vegetables	15 oz.	1 can	0.75	0.75
Peas	15 oz.	2 cans	0.59	1.17
Spaghetti Sauce	15 oz.	1 can	1.29	1.29
Potatoes (dehydrated)	16 oz.	1 can	1.99	1.99
Sweet Potatoes	15 oz.	2 cans	0.82	1.64
Tomato Sauce	15 oz.	2 cans	0.49	0.98
Soup-Vegetable Low Salt	10.5 oz.	2 cans	0.99	1.98
Cream Style Corn	15 oz.	1 can	0.69	0.69
Canned Juices				
Cran-Apple	46 oz. can	2 cans	1.99	3.98
Pineapple	46 oz. can	1 can	1.79	1.79
Fruits				
Fruit Cocktail	15 oz. can	2 cans	0.89	1.78
Prunes	16 oz. can	1 can	2.29	2.29
Pears	15 oz. can	3 cans	1.19	3.57
Raisins	15 oz. can	1 can	0.89	0.89
Meat				
Beef, frozen	16 oz.	1 package	1.39	1.39
Chicken, frozen	Approx. 4 lbs	1 package	5.16	5.16
Beef, canned	29 oz.	1 can	3.38	3.38
Tuna, canned	12 oz.	1 can	1.49	1.49
Dry Beans				
Great Northern	32 oz.	1 can	1.58	1.58
Cheese, Processed				
Evaporated Milk	12 oz.	1 can	0.89	0.89
Egg Noodles	16 oz.	1 package	1.09	1.09
Bakery Mix	5 lbs.	1 package	3.44	3.44
Macaroni and Cheese	26 oz.	1 package	2.37	2.37
Spaghetti	32 oz.	1 package	1.99	1.99
Rice	32 oz.	1 package	0.96	0.96
Cereal, Oat Circles	15 oz.	1 box	3.29	3.29
Cereal, Rice Crisps	15 oz.	1 box	3.99	3.99
Shortening	3 lbs.	1 package	3.69	3.69
Butter	16 oz.	1 block	2.99	2.99
Corn Syrup	24 oz.	1 bottle	1.59	1.59
TOTAL				71.70